

GAME BOARD FOR PLAYING LEGAL GAME

**Cross-Reference to Related Applications**

5 [0001] This application is a continuing application of provisional application Serial No. 60/405,636 filed August 22, 2002.

**Technical Field of the Invention**

10 [0002] The present invention relates to a board game, and, more particularly to a board game that involves players in a "mock" judicial experience playing the roles of Judge, Plaintiff and Defendant.

15 **Background of the Invention**

[0003] Almost everyone enjoys viewing a good legal movie and most would like, if just for a moment, to play the part of the Judge, Plaintiff or even Defendant. It is desirable to have a board game that allows the players to participate 20 in a brief judicial hearing, more akin to a small claims court, where lawyers, rules of evidence, motions and discovery are all left to real life.

[0004] Conventional board games, prior to introduction of personal computers and the worldwide web, were usually 25 educational in nature. Patent No. 4,509,922 discloses a legal board game. The main objective of the game is to teach legal subject matter that takes a player through the fundamentals of law including legal terminology, legal strategy and various court systems. Patent No. 6,416,055 30 which issued July 9, 2002 is also an educational board game

whose main objective is a method for teaching fundamental aspects of advocacy, debating, negotiation and judicial decision-making.

[0005] Today's television programs seem to surround the 5 courtroom which brings legal issues directly into our living rooms, and with the pressures of life, most popular games today provide an escape from daily doldrums and are a way for the players to have fun with minimum mental effort. It will be appreciated that it would be highly desirable to 10 have a legal board game for amusement, entertainment and excitement that allows the players to perhaps realize a dream of being a lawyer advocate or Judge. It is also desirable to have a board game environment that would function as an alternative recreational activity and allow 15 the players to relate to real life circumstances and examine possible outcomes and appreciate various legal consequences.

#### **Summary of the Invention**

[0006] The present invention is directed to overcoming 20 one or more of the problems set forth above. According to the present invention a board game comprises a board, game cards, rules, means for determining the legal discipline for the game and means for determining the hierarchy of 25 players. The game board has thereon a plurality of areas with each area representing a particular legal discipline. There is a plurality of game cards for each area of the board with scenarios relating to a legal discipline for the area of said board. Means are provided for determining the 30 hierarchy of players, and means are provided for selecting a particular legal discipline for the game.

**[0007]** Dividing the game board surface into a plurality of areas triangular in configuration facilitates assigning an area of the game board to different areas of the law for play, for example, contracts, domestic relations,

5 intellectual property, labor relations, landlord/tenant, torts, etc. For visual appeal, each said of the plurality of areas of the board can have a distinct color with scenario cards in a matching color.

**[0008]** The number of pluralities of game cards is equal 10 in number to the number of areas of the game board. Each plurality of game cards has scenarios pertaining to a particular area of law, such as contracts or domestic relations for example.

**[0009]** There are a plurality of game pieces, such as a 15 gavel with a number of miniature gavels to fit into openings in the regular gavel so that when a predetermined number of miniature gavels is collected, the player wins the game.

**[0010]** The discipline of law to be the subject of the 20 game is determined by spinning a gavel, preferably attached to a central location of the board. The hierarchy of players is determined by rolling a die .

**[0011]** The present invention provides a legal board game for amusement, entertainment and excitement that allows the 25 players to dream of being a lawyer advocate or Judge and to play such role. It is an alternative recreational activity that allow the players to relate to real life circumstances and examine possible outcomes and appreciate various legal consequences.

[0012] These and other aspect, objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from a study of the detailed description of the invention and by reference to the accompanying drawings.

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**Brief Description of the Drawings**

[0013] Figure 1 is top view of preferred embodiment of a game board according to the present.

10 [0014] Figure 2 illustrates stacks of game cards containing various legal scenarios.

[0015] Figure 3 is a side view of a gavel having a series of bores according the present invention.

[0016] Figure 4 is a side view of miniature gavels according to the present invention.

15 [0017] Figure 5 is top view of the gavel of Figure 1 rotated upward into the page 90° with miniature gavels of Figure 3 inserted into the apertures.

[0018] Figure 6 is a die.

[0019] Figure 7 is a front view of an hour glass.

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**Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments**

25 [0020] Referring to Figure 1, game board 10 is rectangular in configuration with a circular area thereon representing the actual game surface. The game surface has at its center an object, such as a gavel 14, capable of spinning and coming to rest on one of several areas of the circle. Preferably, the circular game surface is divided into a number of triangular sections 16. Preferably, there are six triangular sections 16 with four sections labeled 30 to reflect disciplines of law, such as torts, contracts,

employment, and property for example, and two sections labeled et al. to reflect various areas of law. The sections labeled et al. may be positioned diametrically opposite one another on the game surface. The triangular sections of the game surface may be color coded so that each triangular section is a different color except for the et al. sections which are the same color.

5 [0021] Each of the triangular sections may have a descriptive drawing or symbol located thereon 10 representative of the particular area of law. Placing the drawing near the center of the triangular shaped section allows room for game cards to be placed on corresponding sections of the game surface without obscuring the drawing.

15 [0022] Referring to Figure 2, there are six stacks of game cards 18 with each stack colored to correspond to the color of the associated triangular section 16 of the game surface. The rear face of each game card is labeled to correspond to one of the triangular sections. The front face of each game card provides a legal scenario, language 20 representing opposing positions for the plaintiff and defendant, and resolution statements for the judge.

25 [0023] Referring to Figures 3-5, there are two gavels. One gavel (not shown) is used only by judge to maintain order and deliver a final decision. The other gavel 20 has a plurality of bores or apertures 22 for receiving miniature gavels 24. There are preferably seven apertures 22 with each aperture 22 receiving a miniature gave 24 for a total of seven miniature gavels to win the game. There are at least two gavels 20, one for the plaintiff and one 30 for the defendant.

[0024] Referring to Figure 6, a die 26 is used to determine the hierarchy of players. The player rolling the highest number of the die get first choice of the three roles, judge, plaintiff and defendant.

5 [0025] Referring to Figure 7, a minute timer 28 is used to limit discussion and maintain timeliness of game rounds. A one-minute timer is preferred for a fast paced game, but longer time periods can be used.

[0026] Operation of the present invention is believed to 10 be apparent from the foregoing description and drawings, but a few words will be added for emphasis. Each player rolls the dice. The highest roller gets to choose to play one role for him/herself as either plaintiff, defendant or judge. The second highest roller gets to choose to play 15 one of the two remaining roles for him/herself. The plaintiff and defendant each are given a gavel with apertures while the judge is given a regular gavel. Alternatively, instead of the high roller choosing one role, the high roller could choose all of the roles 20 choosing from among the players who will play plaintiff, defendant and judge.

[0027] The plaintiff chooses the area of law by spinning the rotating gavel in the center of the game board. After the rotating gavel stops spinning, plaintiff selects a game 25 card from the top of the stock where the rotating gavel points. The plaintiff hands the game card face down to the judge. Alternatively, instead of plaintiff or defendant spinning the gavel wheel on the board game to select the area of law, the judge could to spin the gavel wheel and

make the legal category selection in addition to reading the game cards.

[0028] The judge reads aloud the brief facts of the case beginning by reading the plaintiff's claim allegations and 5 the defendant's defense. If witnesses are required, defendant first then plaintiff chooses witnesses among the other players. Witnesses are determined based on the game card scenario.

[0029] The judge then places the timer on the board and 10 gives the plaintiff one-minute to add or expound on the facts of the case. After one minute, the judge turns the timer over and gives the defendant one-minute to add or expound on the facts of the case. After one minute, the judge turns the time over and asks plaintiff and defendant 15 questions for one minute each and allows both parties to wholeheartedly argue their case (the judge may have to use the gavel during this session if plaintiff and defendant both speak at the same time).

[0030] If witnesses are testifying, the judge will give 20 both plaintiff and defendant an additional one-minute to present their witnesses. After the laughter stops the judge uses the gavel to render the verdict, either in favor of the plaintiff or in favor of the defendant by pounding the gavel.

25 [0031] Each game card provides a ruling that should be made in favor of either the plaintiff or defendant, if during the one-minute exposition given to each plaintiff and defendant, the judge hears a similar argument put forth. The judge is the final authority.

[0032] If the judge finds in favor of the plaintiff the judge states "I feel that the plaintiff has proven his/her case and rule in favor of the plaintiff". If the judge finds in favor of the defendant the judge states "I feel 5 that the defendant has more that adequately defended his position and I rule in favor of the defendant.

[0033] An optional method of play is, at the outset, two or more teams of three players could be selected and each team would follow the same procedures set forth above.

10 [0034] Scoring is calculated on a point system with one miniature gavel representing one point. The plaintiff earns one miniature gavel or point for having a verdict in his/her favor. Likewise, the defendant earns one miniature gavel or point for having a case decided in his/her favor.

15 Alternatively, the plaintiff could earn two miniature gavels for having a verdict in his/her favor. Likewise, the defendant could earn two miniature gavel points for having a case decided in his/her favor.

[0035] As, an optional scoring method, after either 20 defendant or plaintiff or both have attained five miniature gavel points, the defendant and plaintiff could begin to loose points for having a case decided against him/her. For example, if after plaintiff has attained five points, the next case is decided in favor of the defendant, the 25 plaintiff would then loose one miniature gavel point. Likewise if after defendant has attained five points, the next case is decided in favor of the plaintiff, the defendant would then loose one miniature gavel point. The first player to fill his/her gavel with seven miniature 30 gavels is the winner of the game

[0036] While the invention has been described with particular reference to the preferred embodiments, it is evident that certain aspects of the invention are not limited to the particular details of the examples 5 illustrated, and it is therefore contemplated that other modifications and applications will occur to those skilled in the art. It is accordingly intended that the claims shall cover all such modifications and applications as do not depart from the true spirit and scope of the invention.

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